

Woman's Home Missionary
Association.

CHRISTIAN WORK
IN UTAH.

By:

FRANK WOOD, Printer, 343 Washington Street.
1884.

IT may be an encouragement to our faith in the utter overthrow of Mormonism, to look a little into the work of the various Christian denominations in Utah.

It is an established fact that the parents are best reached through the children, and our friends of the Protestant Episcopal Church were among the first to prove the truth of this, by opening the Christian Schools in Utah. As early as 1868, this Church opened the first School there, and now has 691 pupils in all. During those years 3,500 children have come under its immediate care in day-schools, and there are at present 800 children in its Sunday-schools. It has the largest church membership—453—of any of our churches in Utah. When the schools were first opened, all ages and grades of learning were admitted; but now the pupils are well classified, from the Primary up to the Classical Department. It is the distinct aim of this, as we believe it is that of all other evangelical denominations, to prepare the pupils for useful Christian lives, so that if they shall be removed from school at an early age, they shall still have acquired a practical knowledge which shall be always useful to them. Two years after the Episcopalian, and one year before the Presbyterian, the Methodist denomination, in 1870, had its attention turned toward Utah. Its first school opened with 28 pupils, in September of that year, in Salt Lake City.

This denomination now has 607 students in its day-schools, employs 21 teachers, and has ten churches, with a membership of 235. It has been hindered somewhat in its work by the frequent change in pastors and teachers. The Baptists but very recently, within eighteen months, began work in the Territory. They are just preparing to dedicate a very pretty church edifice in Salt Lake City. In these few months they have established two schools, which now contain 110 pupils; and two churches with 120 communicants. One, at least, of their faithful teachers, in addition to her other work, has had the conduct of religious services on the Sabbath and at funerals. Indeed, the town where she is, is destitute of all religious privileges but what she gives it. The Presbyterian denomination has more teachers, and more pupils in its schools, than any other. It employs 56 teachers, who have about 2,300 pupils. Its 15 churches and 33 schools are grouped geographically, so as to furnish each minister with a circuit. The Collegiate Institute, under the charge of this church, was opened in Salt Lake City, April, 1875, and soon grew from 30 to 235 pupils, its present number. In the first six years, over 600 pupils were connected with this school.

We take the liberty to quote from a few letters recently published in the *Presbyterian Home Missionary*. One teacher speaks of the difference between the girls

who board in the school and the day scholars, and says: "This is chiefly owing to two facts: first, we try in all things to keep the atmosphere that of a Christian home; and, second, all the members of the household are under law all the time; and as neither of these things is so much as heard of in the homes from which they come, our home girls are at a decided advantage, and they should show it in increased knowledge and thoughtfulness. I think, also, there are signs of the Spirit's working in one or two of them."

The girls of this school are willing to be very much crowded, if they can only be under the Christian home influence. They room in the chapel, and the teacher writes: "It is especially awkward and inconvenient to turn the schoolroom into a bedroom, and to dispose of clothing etc., almost impossible, sometimes, but we live through it." In another school, opened only last fall, there are 51 pupils, ranging from four to twelve years of age. The teacher has been confined to her room for two weeks, during which time not one Mormon neighbor came near the house, though previously they had not hesitated to come every day for favors, borrowing, etc. They said her illness was a visitation of Providence, and it would be a sin for them to sympathize with a wicked Gentile.

In our own denomination, the New West Education Commission has a goodly record

in the four years of its existence. During that time it has established 28 schools in Utah, and there are now 1475 pupils in these schools. Two Congregational churches, the one in Salt Lake City and the other in Park City, have a membership of 202. The schools opened by the New West Education Commission have prepared the way for the home missionaries, of whom there are now four in Utah. During this last winter there has been a great deal of religious interest in Salt Lake City. Union meetings were held every evening through January and February, and since that time on two evenings in the week, and an afternoon meeting for children additional. The gospel has been preached in its simplicity, so that a child could understand. The free primary schools in this city, whose teachers are supported by the Woman's Home Missionary Association, have received a blessing from these meetings. Many of the children accompany their teachers to church on Sunday, even walking miles to do so.

Rev. Mr Peebles, Home Missionary, has held Sabbath evening services in the school-houses, and at one of the recent ones nearly seventy people listened to the story of the Prodigal Son.

The Mormons have threatened to make attending the Christian school a test of fellowship in the Mormon Church; but we have heard of one instance in which a bishop asked the Christian teacher to excuse his not

sending his children to her school, as he was afraid of the authorities. "The priesthood were never more intolerant, despotic, and vindictive than at the present time, and never more bitterly opposed to American ideas of society, education, government, and religion." "The spiritual darkness of Utah is terrible. The Mormon religion is not a religion of Christ; it is simply priestcraft. The people are ignorant and deluded. If any become intelligent enough to leave the church, they are unbelievers in everything which bears the name of religion; or, even worse than that, become Spiritualists."

So writes one of our teachers in Utah. Now, these Christian schools carry the religion of Jesus Christ into the heart of Mormonism, and the faithful, self-sacrificing Christian women have done much to open the eyes of the people among whom they teach.

Women are peculiarly adapted to win the hearts of children; and when once this is accomplished, the threats of the priest, although they may prevail for awhile, will not succeed in keeping the children away altogether. More Christian women are ready to carry the gospel into Utah than there are churches found willing to support them. There are seventeen towns in this Territory, with populations ranging from 500 to 1500, in not one of which is there any Christian work.

Of the 143,000 inhabitants in Utah, 60,377 are Mormons. Polygamy is on the increase in the smaller towns. Not so many difficulties stand in the way of the missionaries to Africa, as in the way of those to Utah. What is needed is a powerful revival in the hearts of the churches at the East, that they may be constrained to send the gospel to these Western States and Territories now groaning under this worst of slaveries. From all of our Utah Schools come letters of encouragement. Children are interested in the lessons of the day, eager to learn their text of Scripture to recite to the teacher, and there are some instances of hopeful conversion. One of our teachers writes: "The half-dozen young people who have outgrown Mormonism during the past year, meet once a week for a little talk on practical subjects, and their readiness to settle all questions by the light of Bible truth, is encouraging."

Another speaks of the interest her little ones show in Bible stories, and the large numbers in her day and Sunday-school, and adds: "Don't you think I ought to be happy, I see so much that is cheering, so much to encourage me? Perhaps I am selfish, but I wish so much to keep every child who wants to come to school!"

Still another tells an incident which illustrates how little the children there know of the Bible. She says: "I left a little girl, ten

years old, alone in my room for a short time one day. When I returned, she told me she had read my Lord book most through. I found on inquiry that she meant a little book of Psalms, which lay on the table." The Latter Day Saints as a whole are not ambitious. Their apostles and bishops take all the responsibility for this life and the next, and so they want nothing better than to be let alone. As a rule they are easily influenced, and we must plant in their midst the Christian school and Sunday-school, whose influence they cannot resist. In that way, and in no better, can we expect to reach the masses of Utah. In closing, let us look once more briefly at the statistics of the work of Christian denominations in Utah.

	Schools.	Teachers.	Pupils.	Ministers.	Communicants.
Episcopalian,	5	26	691	7	455
Methodist,	9	23	607	10	235
Presbyterian,	33	56	2275	15	310
Baptists,	2	3	110	2	120
Congregational,	28	33	1475	7	292
Total,	77	146	5158	41	1328

How small and insignificant do these figures seem when we read that four years

age in Utah were 34,701 children under eight years of age in the Mormon Church, and of these 34,701 children, now grown older by four years, we have in all the Christian schools only 5158. These schools must be greatly multiplied if they would accomplish all we want them to in training the youth of Utah in the ways of righteousness. Congress will not send the Christian free school: it must be the work of the churches to plant them in every town in Utah. We are neglecting Christ's last command to disciple all nations, when we forget to begin at Jerusalem to teach and preach the gospel to the various nationalities drawn from their homes into Utah Territory, at the will of the Mormon Church. A few evangelical Scandinavian Lutheran missionaries have recently come among their own in Utah, and are doing what they can to preach the gospel to their people here, and also to expose Mormonism to those who remain in their native land. What shall we do for them, we who are free to worship God according to the dictates of our own conscience? Pray for them; and in praying for them, help to answer our prayers by our gifts. It is according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not, that his gift is valued. Then let us give of our time, to interest and enlighten others on this subject; of our money, to send teachers; or of ourselves, to be of the number of those Christian

teachers whose great privilege it shall be to help break every yoke, and bid the oppressed in Utah go free.

Sent from Room of Woman's Home Missionary Association, No. 29 Congregational House, Boston, Mass.

APRIL, 1884.

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Leaflets can be obtained of the Secretary, Miss NATHALIE LOAN, at the above address.

[*Printed, not published.*]